

**AN ASSESSMENT OF DAMAGE TO  
ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE CA-CAL-836  
CAUSED BY ILLEGAL SITE LOOTING  
FROM RELIC-HUNTERS DURING AUGUST, 1990**

Prepared by

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### Summary

CA-CAL-836 is a prehistoric archeological site located approximately 13 miles east of West Point in Calaveras County. It is a highly-significant archeological site consisting of bedrock mortars and adjacent cultural deposits which are extremely rich with artifacts (such as "arrowheads", beads, etc.) and occupational refuse. Prior to the damage reported herein, the site was in excellent condition. It had not been impacted from previous logging and was one of few sites in this area not vandalized by relic-hunters. As such, the site had tremendous scientific value.

The area containing this archeological site was recently logged by Georgia-Pacific Corporation under THP # 4-90-51/CAL-9 and was protected during the logging operations. Unfortunately, someone has recently conducted excavations and looting at CA-CAL-836 causing extensive damage to the archeological deposit. This activity is a violation of section 622.5 of the Penal Code.

The site was re-examined by the author on August 30, 1990. A crime report was filed by the Calaveras County Sheriff's Department (case #905929) and an investigation is in progress. It is my opinion that this site-looting incident is logging-related, and was conducted by someone connected with the logging crew. I also believe that Georgia-Pacific's failure to adequately post the site with "Area Controlled" signs directly contributed to this incident.

### Site Description and Background

The archeological site in question is on land owned by Georgia-Pacific Corporation and located east of the community of West Point in the SE 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of section 23, T7N, R15E MDM. It is located on the Garnet Hill 7.5' USGS Quadrangle (see attached map). This is a relatively small, but remarkably rich prehistoric habitation site with a well-developed cultural midden associated to bedrock milling stations. The midden is extremely dark, black, powdery, ashy, and greasy, indicative of seasonal, repeated occupation by native people over a considerable number of years. The total area containing the archeological site measures 75 meters x 50 meters, but the midden area is somewhat smaller.

The site is neatly situated on an elevated, flat clearing in a mixed coniferous forest, approximately 25 meters west of a small seasonal stream. It was originally discovered in 1982 by forester Mark Mueller during his preparation of THP # 4-82-70/CAL for American Forest Products Corporation (the timber company who owned and managed the land at that time). It was officially

recorded by Dan Foster et al. on July 2, 1982 during the review process for the previous Timber Harvesting Plan. The site was described as having excellent integrity and in "nearly pristine" condition. Only the northern portion of the site had been lightly impacted by previous logging, but the larger of the two midden areas was completely undisturbed. In fact, it was literally covered with artifacts, suggesting that relic-hunters had not yet been there.

My survey of this remarkable site in July, 1982 revealed (3) Desert Side-Notched and (1) Rose Spring projectile points, (1) pestle, (2) obsidian flake scrapers, worked nodules of soapstone, and thousands of flakes of chert, obsidian, jasper, basalt, quartz, and chalcedony. These materials are characteristic of the final prehistoric period in the Central Sierra region named the Madera Phase and thought to date from AD 1500 to AD 1850. The site may also have earlier components in the deeper levels.

#### Statement of Site Significance

In many respects, CA-CAL-836 could be viewed as a rather ordinary archeological site typical of many sites known from the foothills of Calaveras County. Some of these low-elevation sites are larger, and have richer cultural deposits with greater archeological potential. There are several considerations, however which highlight the significance of this particular site. This is not a foothill site; it is a high-Sierra prehistoric campsite at an elevation of 5220 feet. As such, this is a remarkably rich campsite which offers a rare opportunity to investigate the seasonal habits of prehistoric people occupying the high-Sierra. Most other archeological sites at this elevation lack rich cultural deposits and consequently have limited usefulness for archeological research.

This site may also prove to be valuable for studies related to the definition of tribal territories in the upper elevations of the Central Sierra Nevada region. This site may have been visited by cultures of the Miwok, Washoe, or perhaps Mono linguistic groups.

There is no question regarding the significance of this site. It is extremely high. The site may even prove to be unique in many characteristics. Further evaluation of its significance must await subsequent intensive investigation of this site including scientific excavation and analysis which has not yet taken place.

### The 1990 Logging and Discover of Site Damage

The area surrounding this archeological site was recently logged again, this time by Georgia-Pacific Corporation under THP # 4-90-51/CAL-9. Prior to the approval of this project by CDF, an archeological survey was conducted by consultants Marcus Arguelles and Les Harville. They provided the following recommendations for the protection of CA-CAL-836 in their survey report:

This is a small habitation site with associated bedrock milling features that appears to have good integrity. The site was recorded by CDF personnel in 1982 (Foster et al, 1982). At that time Foster noted a wide variety of artifactual material including 4 small projectile points, 2 obsidian scrapers, a pestle fragment, a piece of worked steatite, and over 5,000 flakes of chert, obsidian, metavolcanics, jasper, chalcedony and quartz. In addition, Foster noted an apparently non-random distribution of mortar cups in a granite outcrop. Although Foster did not test the depth of the midden deposit, he states that it is likely to be a meter deep and that there is a possibility of burials on the site.

This site should be scrupulously avoided during road construction, brush clearing and timber harvesting operations. Trees should not be fallen within the site perimeter. Trees in the proximity of the site should be fallen in a manner that will not impact the site and no trees should be skidded across the site. Heavy equipment should not be parked on or driven across the site. Additionally, the site should be marked with metal Controlled Area Tags to facilitate recognition of the site as a sensitive area in the future. Georgia-Pacific Corporation should also be cognizant of the potential for unauthorized relic collecting and vandalism in the area and discourage these practices whenever possible.

The density and variety of the cultural deposits on this site coupled with the fact that it exhibits very good integrity suggest that this site would qualify for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria D in that it may contribute important information in the prehistory of the area. Further study of this site would be highly desirable.

In the Timber Harvesting Plan, Georgia-Pacific stated that they "agree to follow the recommendations for protection of the sites on the THP which are in an attached addendum entitled A Cultural Resource Sensitivity Study of the Barnett THP". It is important to note that Georgia-Pacific did not mark the site with metal Area Controlled Tags" as they agreed to, and unauthorized relic collecting and vandalism has occurred.

The site damage was first observed by CDF Forest Practice Inspector John Shimer on August 23, 1990. He was participating in a Category 2 audit inspection on this property, assisted by CDF Foresters Becky Robertson, Norm Cook and Ken Nielson. Mr. Shimer reported the vandalism to Dan Foster (CDF Archeology Program Manager) on August 24, 1990 and an archeological field inspection was scheduled for August 30, 1990.

### Archeological Field Inspection and Investigation

An archeological field inspection took place on August 30, 1990. Present were Dan Foster, Ron Monk (Georgia-Pacific Forester), Donne Kauppi (Calaveras County Deputy Sheriff), Ken Nielson (CDF Litigation Coordinator) and John Munn (CDF, soil scientist). We met at the CDF West Point Fire Station at 10:00 am and drove to archeological site CA-CAL-836, arriving there at 11:00 am.

John Shimer's report was entirely accurate. Both midden areas had recently been extensively looted by relic-hunters. Several dozen excavation pits were observed as well as many screen-piles. these piles of small pebbles and bark chips had been dumped from a screen after it had passed fine soils through hardware cloth. Three piles of chipped-stone flakes were found on the surrounding bedrock. These concentrations of discarded artifacts were left by the site looters. The entire surface of both midden areas appear to have been shoveled and screened to a depth of approximately 6 to 12 inches. Surface artifacts are now extremely rare, since these have been screened-out of the cultural deposit.

This was obviously a non-scientific archeological excavation conducted by illicit relic-hunters. The deposit was simply shoveled-out and screened. Ron Monk informed us that Georgia-Pacific Corporation has not authorized permission for anyone to excavate this site prior to August 30, 1990.

We observed footprints on the midden and I believe that some of these were left by the perpetrators of this illicit excavation. The other footprints were apparently made by Mr. Shimer, Becky Robertson, Norm Cook and Ken Nielson during their inspection on August 23, 1990. All of these individuals were wearing CDF uniforms including leather boots with Vibram soles. These CDF boots leave a distinctive "waffled" footprint. I observed different footprints which might have been left by the suspects. One of these was a large print from a plain, pointed sole, perhaps from a cowboy boot. The other was a small non-descript footprint approximately 6 inches long, probably left by a child. Our assessment that the perpetrators were one adult man and one child is also supported by other physical evidence found at the crime scene. These were a cigarette butt, a candy wrapper, a plastic six-pack holder, and two plastic ice bags.

No brand could be detected on the cigarette butt as it had been smoked to the nub. It was a filter-type. The candy wrapper was from a large-size "Milky Way" bar. The plastic holder was from a six-pack of beer or soda-pop; probably beer. The ice bags probably were used for ice contained in a cooler to keep canned beverages cold. These items lacked weathering indicating they had been dropped there within the past several days. It is my opinion that they were left by the site-looters. The cooler full of beer suggests that they spent a considerable amount of time excavating the site which supports my observations at the disturbed midden that it had been extensively pilfered.

#### Evidence Concerning the Timing of the Incident and Identification of the Perpetrators

After interviewing several knowledgeable individuals including John Shimer, Tom Lowry and Mide Anderson, I can state with certainty that the crime occurred between August 10, 1990 and August 23, 1990. the logging was completed in the area surrounding this site on August 10. According to RPF Tom Lowery and based upon his visit to the site during the logging, the site was in an undisturbed condition at that time. Quite possibly, the crime took place on a weekend; perhaps during the weekend of August 11-12 or August 18-19, 1990.

As of this writing, we have not yet identified the person or persons who committed this crime, but evidence strongly suggests that it was someone connected with the logging activities which had recently been completed. the crew from Anderson Logging, Inc. was shown the exact location of this site (on-the-ground) in order to protect it during logging activities. Unfortunately, the significance of this site, including its rich deposit of surface artifacts, was emphasized in the archeological survey report attached to the timber harvesting plan. A complete copy of all of this information wa provided to the loggers. In addition, RPF Tom Lowery showed the archeological site and its flagged boundaries to Mr. George Carlton (the foreman for Anderson Logging, Inc.) to discuss how it will be avoided during the logging operations. Presumably, Mr. Carlton then pointed the site out to the entire crew working in that area in order to facilitate its protection. the timing of the incident and the secluded location of this archeological site, strongly suggests that one of the loggers was involved.

It is true that the THP is a public document, and a possibility exists that an individual unconnected with the logging operation committed the crime, perhaps having been provided its location contained in the THP. I believe that this is highly unlikely. The CDF Region Office maintained a list of individuals who received copies of this THP. It was sent to a routine list of



review agencies and one consulting forester who receives all THPs in this area. No person other than those mentioned above received or requested a copy of this THP. CDF Forester Becky Robertson informed me that CDF did not provide a copy of the "Cultural Resource sensitivity of the Barnett THP" to anyone other than those review agencies. The THP itself only contains a topographic map showing the approximate location of the site on the Garnet Hill 7.5 foot quad. This site is hidden by trees and is very difficult to locate unless someone takes you right to it.

The possibility that a hunter or forest visitor just stumbled upon the site and returned a short time later to vandalize it is also unlikely due to the remote hidden location of the site and the suspicious timing of the incident. The crime occurred immediately after the logging crew had been shown the site.

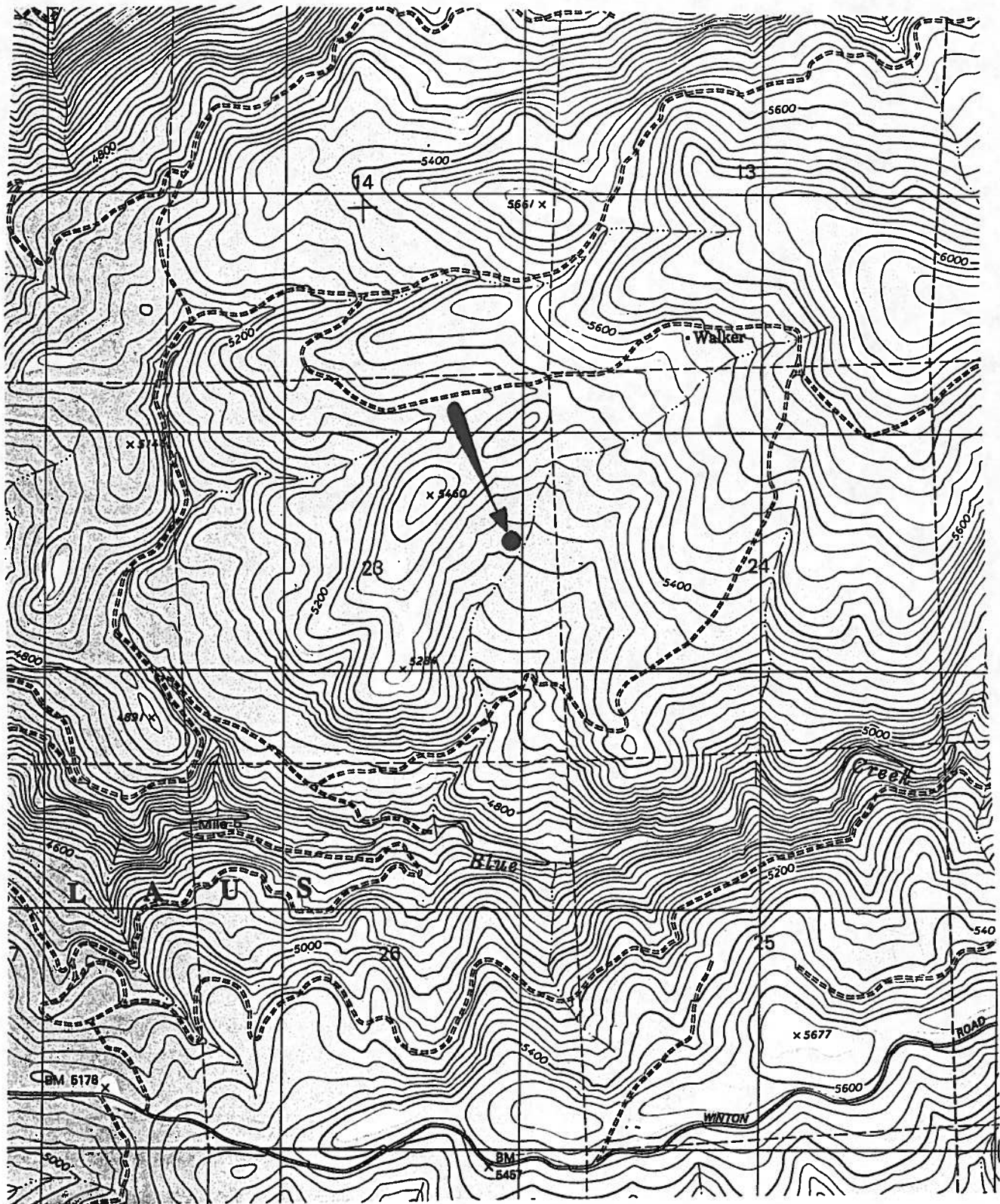
### Conclusion and Recommendations

A highly-significant archeological site was substantially damaged by illegal relic-hunting activity sometime during the 12-day period between August 10 through the 20, 1990. This activity is prohibited by Section 622.5 of the Penal Code. Georgia-Pacific's failure to post the site with metal "Area Controlled" signs and take other preventive measures to discourage vandalism and looting outlined in the consulting report by Arguelles and Harville has contributed to the incident. The posting of "Area Controlled" signs has proven to be an effective deterrent to illegal relic hunting activities associated with logging operations. In my opinion, Georgia-Pacific Corporation should assume financial responsibility and take appropriate corrective action.

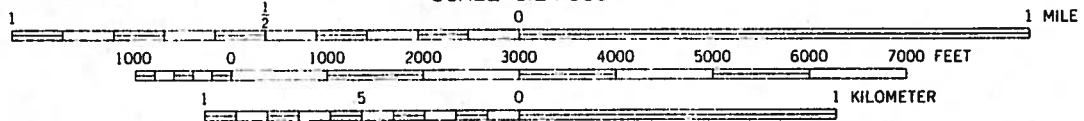
The appropriate action to follow is to immediately procure a comprehensive archeological salvage project. A qualified professional archeological team equipped with adequate funding should be retained to conduct an archeological excavation of this site. The project should include at a minimum, the excavation of 8 - 1 meter x 1 meter test units, surface collection, map, artifact analysis including obsidian sourcing, hydration, radio-carbon dating (if possible) and the preparation of a comprehensive report meeting professional standards and addressing scientifically consequential research issues. The cost for procuring this study is estimated to be between \$6,000 and \$10,000.

The following 11 photographs were  
all taken by Dan Foster on 8/30/90  
at archeological site CA-CAL-836





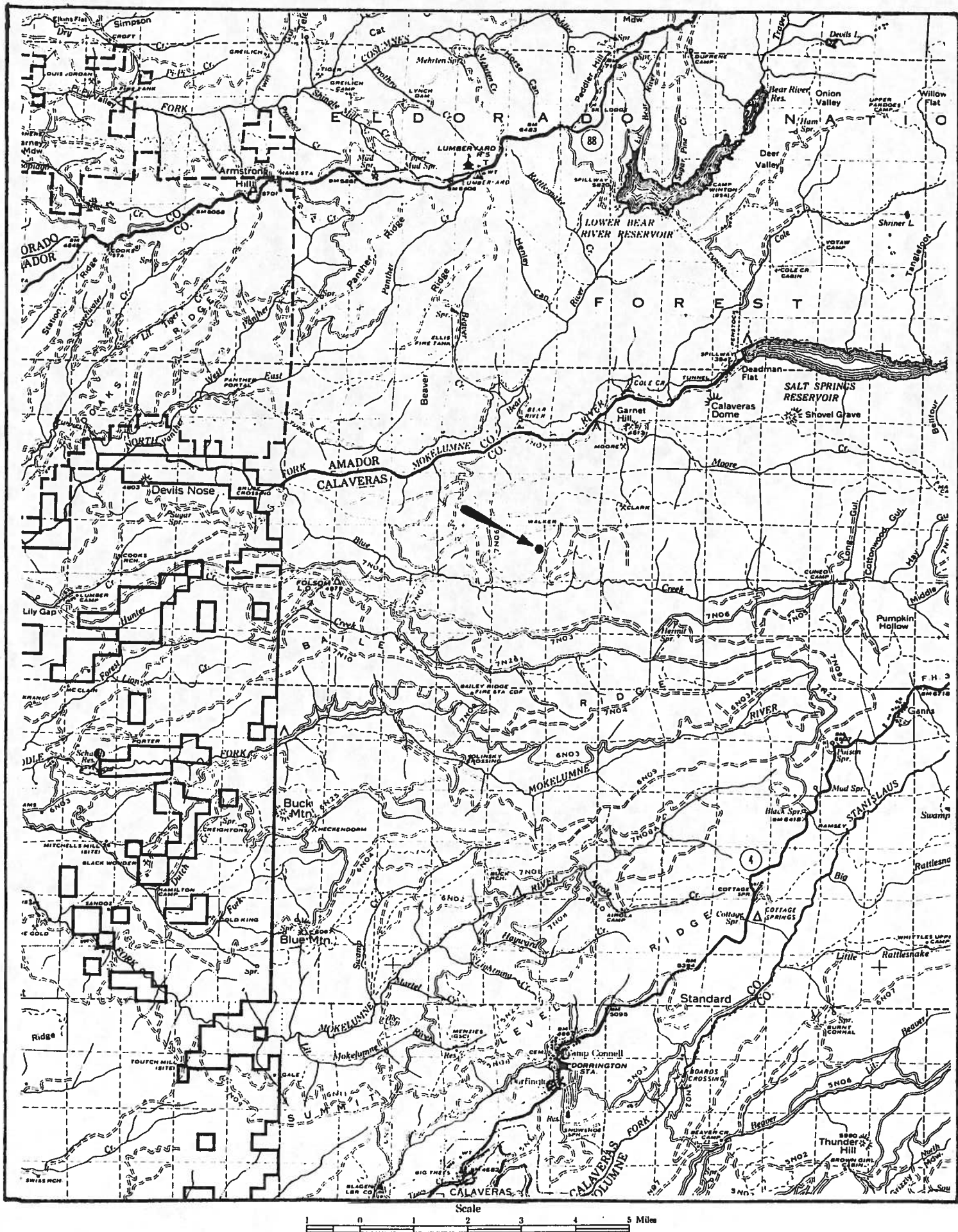
SCALE 1:24 000



CONTOUR INTERVAL 40 FEET

LOCATION OF ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE  
CA-CAL-836 ON THE GARNET HILL 7.5' QUAD

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

VICINITY MAP SHOWING THE LOCATION  
OF ADJACENT AREAS OF THE



Two views looking across the larger  
midden area which has been screened  
to the point that it is now nearly  
devoid of surface artifacts



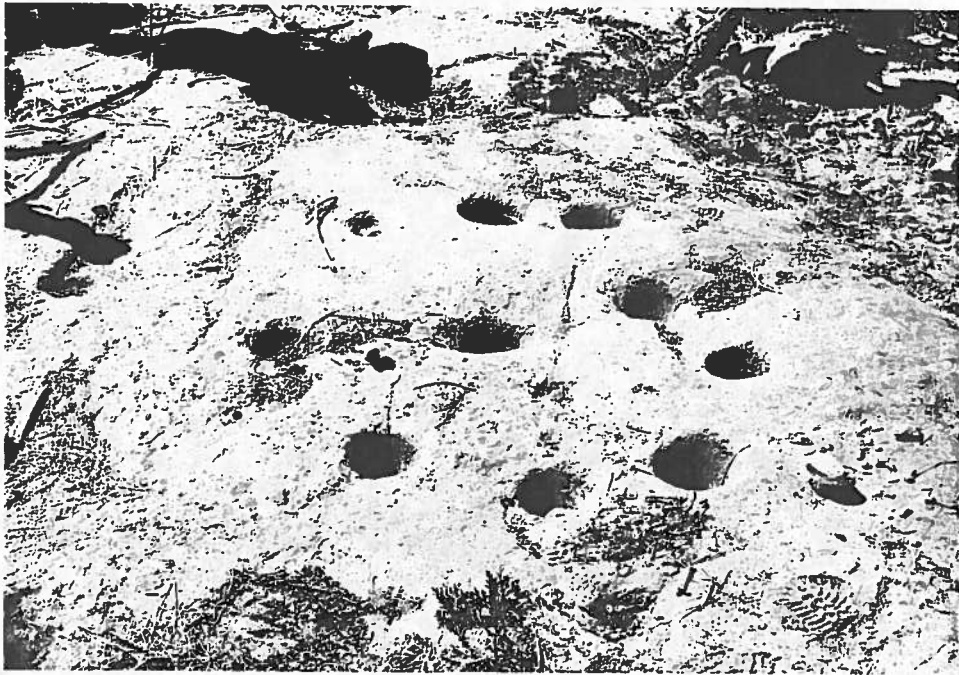




Ron Monk is holding the plastic  
six-pack holder found at the scene



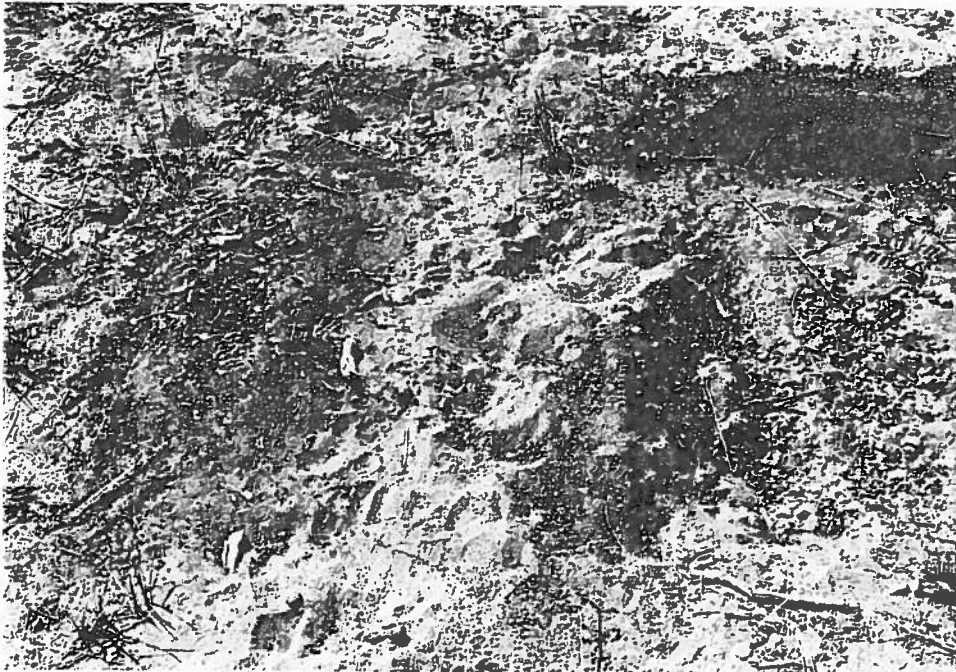
cigarette butt at a screen pile



A pile of discarded artifacts can be seen on the right. The round holes in the rock are called bedrock mortars. They were made and used by the Indians to pound acorns and pine nuts



close-up view of piled artifacts near the bedrock mortars

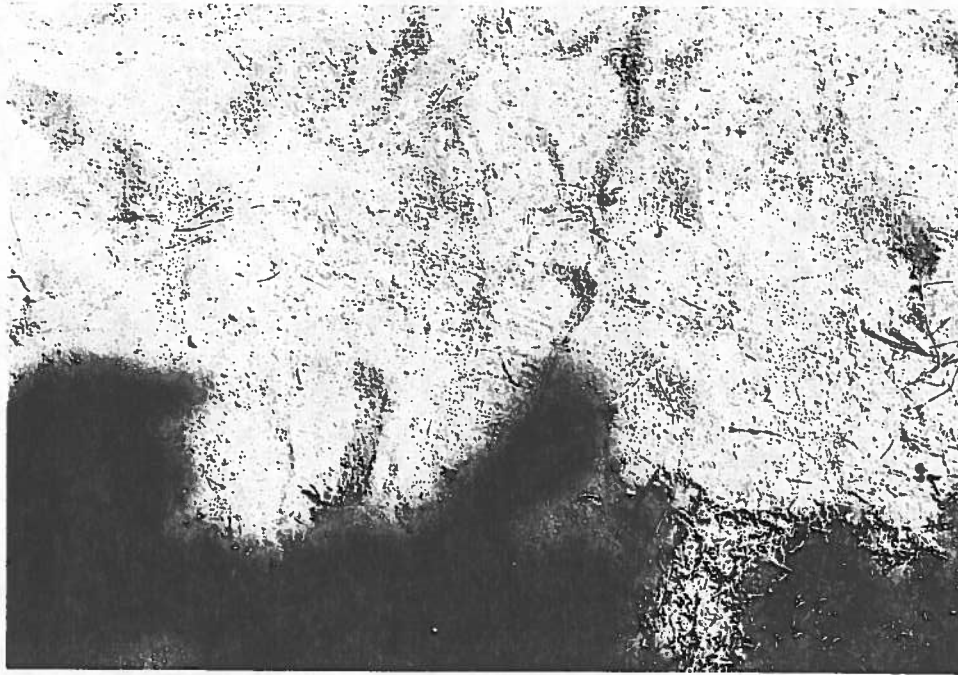


screen piles

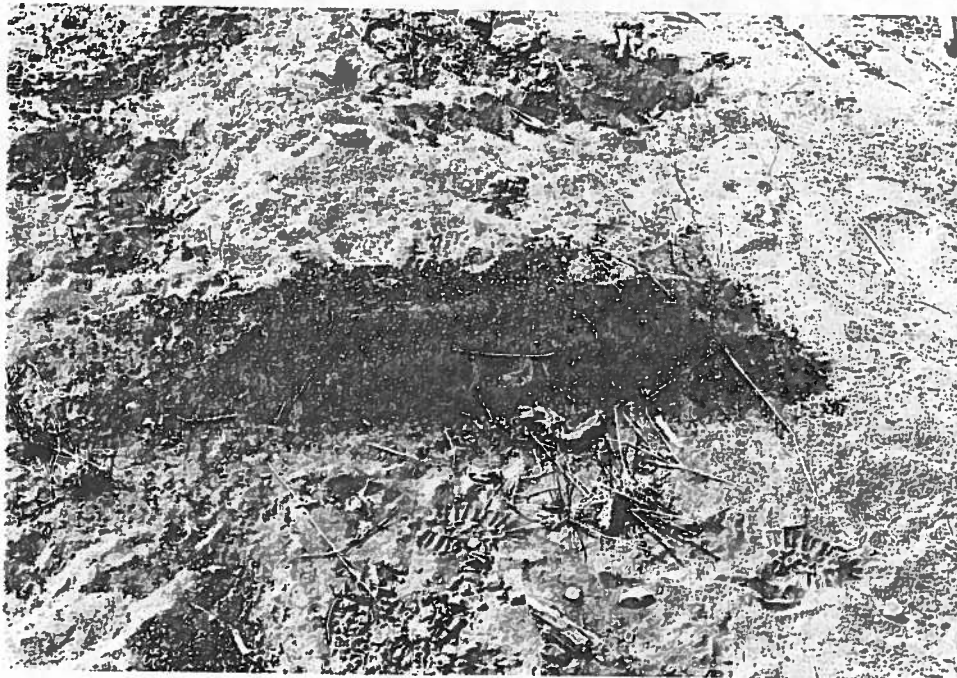


another pile of discarded artifacts  
left on a granite boulder near a  
screen pile



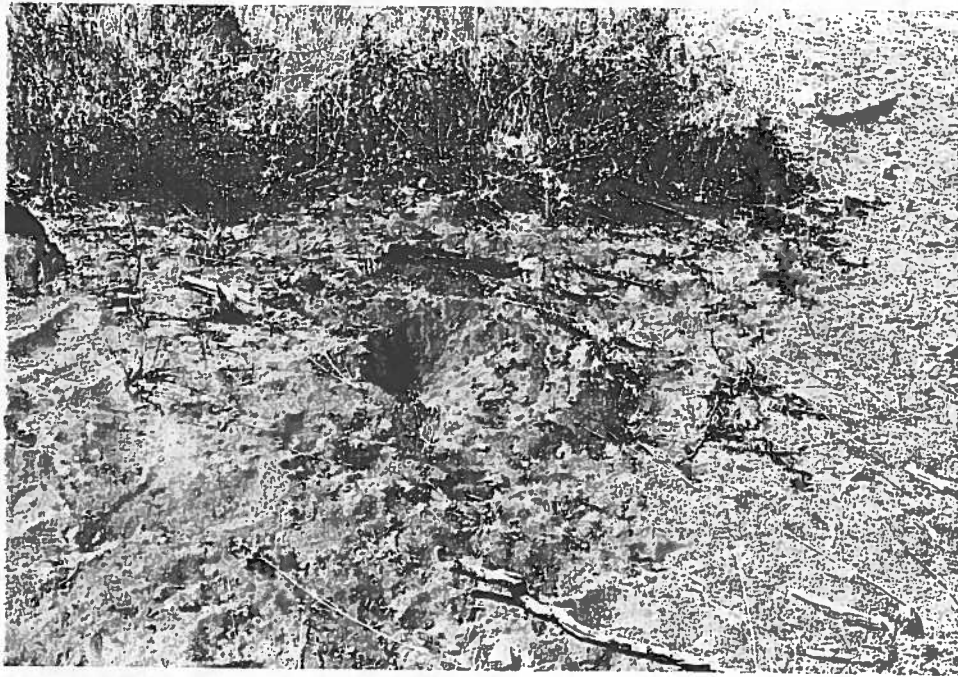


small footprint, app. 6" long, that  
may have been made by a child



screen pile





excavation pit